

# Dr M: Land Act not racially motivated

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By Edward Cheah

**KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. —** Accusations that the amendments to the Land Acquisition Act is racially motivated to take back land belonging to a particular race are illogical and irresponsible, Datuk Seri Dr **Mahathir Mohamad** said today.

The Prime Minister said the Government, which was elected by the people, would not take back land belonging to the rakyat if it was not for the national interest.

He said the amendments were made for the benefit of the people in view of the expanding population and the needs of development.

"In the taking back of any land, the Government does not take into consideration whether it is owned by bumiputras or non-bumiputras," he said.

"The Government will not invoke racial sentiments. This is not how the Barisan Nasional government rules."

Opening the 20th annual delegates conference of the **Gerakan**, Dr Mahathir said the opposition parties had! during the recent **Prai** by-election, discredited the Government by making false accusations and exploiting racial issues.

"The move by the Government to amend the land Acquisition Act had been twisted to suit the in-

terest of the opposition party," he said.

"In this connection, some quarters alleged that the objective was to seize land belonging to non-bumiputras.

"This allegation has no basis whatsoever. Such actions are irresponsible and dangerous.

"In fact, considering that land is an asset which is constantly depleting, it is important for the Government to be given powers to acquire land for continued development.

"The amendments are made for the benefit of the people in view of the expanding population and

the needs of development."

Dr Mahathir said the Government would pay adequate compensation to those affected and if they were not satisfied with the quantum, they could bring the matter to court.

He said the people were now fed up with the opposition parties and had no faith in them.

Barisan component parties, he said, should expose the opposition's lies. They should also guard against wanting to champion the issues created by the Opposition.

He said the people would similarly lose faith in any Barisan component party which tried to champion opposition issues.

Dr Mahathir said Government leaders who planned to turn Malaysia into a developed country were not doing it for their own interests.

"It is for the benefit of future generations. This is because when Malaysia achieves the status of a developed country by the year 2020, most of the present leaders, including myself, would no longer be around," he said.